/66 cont'd/

715 Since Taoism has a great influence upon the lives of the Miao,
713 the Taoist priests therefore assume great importance in Miao society. Furthermore, only a man with the qualifications of a Taoist priest has the opportunity to read the classics and receive an education, and thus to acquire specialized knowledge. Consequently, Taoist
534 priests enjoy a higher social status than an ordinary person and with it, many special privileges. Under such circumstances, all families, except those under very poor economic conditions, (the initiation ceremony costs money) always send their sons to be initiated for the Taoist priesthood. The fact that the above-mentioned unweaned child was carried there by his mother shows how anxious the parents are to have their children initiated. /67/

776 2. Names of the Important Gods

There are many gods which are worshiped by the Miao. According to what they told me, the most important gods are the following:

(a) Yü-huang—the greatest god in heaven;
(b) T'u-ti-kung—the greatest god on earth;
(c) Ching-chü-kung—the greatest mountain god;
(d) Hai-lung-wang—the greatest water god.

3. Traces of Totem Worship

771 According to Miao legend, which will be discussed in the next
789 chapter, the dog was their first ancestor; that was their totem.
825 Traces of totem worship still remain in their everyday life. Though
[262] there are dogs in every family, yet they have never killed them for food. They let the dogs die a natural death, or they trade the dogs with the Li people for other commodities. I have observed this kind of transaction. This apparently derives from the old custom
● [784] of the totemic society, i.e. "to kill totem animals is taboo." Furthermore, the fact that the seal of the military Taoists was inscribed with an outline of a dog might also have some significance here, which is worth noting. /68/

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[171]

1. This kind of water wheel is propelled completely by water power. In the mountainous areas of Hunan and Kweichow where the water flows rapidly, such utilization of natural water power is very widespread. It is not found only in Miao areas. Sung Ying-hsing of the Ming period wrote in his Tien Kung Kai Wu: "The rapid water flowing underneath the wheel makes it rotate, forcing the water into tubes, one by one leading into another bamboo tube and flowing into the field. It never stops day or night; there is no worry for a hundred fields (see Vol. I, 'Nai Li /Grains/')." A kind of water mill (Illus. 31) used in the Miao area also utilizes natural water power.

The size of the water wheel depends upon the height of the terraced fields. By means of long and short bamboo tubes the water is conducted to near and distant fields. The terraced fields in the Miao area involve considerable labor. On a slope where there is a spring, earth is scooped out to make raised paths between fields, which act as dikes, going up in tiers, or stones are piled up to make embankments on both banks of a stream. These man-made terraced fields require a great deal of time and labor and are susceptible to drought. For they rise from the foot to the waist of the mountain, tier by tier, like a ladder, so that it is very easy for the water in the fields to leak away. But in the event of a shortage of rainfall, when the spring fed by mountain streams dries up, irrigation stops

[332]
[333]

[731]
[784]

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243 312 731 784 and a drought, ensues, an event which is greatly feared by the Miao. Every second and third month plowing ceases for seven days, and harrowing is avoided in order to ward off a drought. The period of taboo starts from the nineteenth day of the second month to the twenty-third day, and again, from the thirtieth day of the third month to the first and second day of the fourth month. According to Miao superstition any violation during the period of taboo would bring on the disaster of [782] [688] a drought. Only through prayer and repentance can it be avoided. The violators are required to provide chickens and pigs for the sorcerer who stands at the highest point of the slope to offer prayer and sacrifice (called the "sacrifice to the spirit of the high slope," see the later chapter, "Magic and Religion"). 243 731 When terraced fields come up against floods, although it is not like the lack of harvesting of seeds in a drought, still often the sudden rush of mountain streams bursts through the terraced fields and destroys the structure of the fields. Moreover stones and sand often pile up, which is difficult to repair at once. Sometimes, the field is reduced to a steep incline or a deep gulch beyond repair. So, the Miao people toil all year round: 731 in prosperous years they barely miss cold and starvation. In 648 case of disaster, they are unable to look after themselves: the [432] weak sell their children in exchange for a measure of grain; [858] [579] the strong form gangs to plunder the countryside. When the authorities press too hard on these marauders, then widespread unrest often result. Thus goes the saying: "The Miao area has a small disturbance every five years, and a large disturbance every ten years." The reason is not that the Miao are by nature fond of trouble making, but that they are driven to take dangerous risks by the pressure of poverty /Illus. 27-31 appear [161] on pp. 56-60./ /61/ under a condition of overpopulation in a limited area. Hitherto, each suppression of a Miao disturbance by the government brought about peace, but it lasted only a few years before the outbreak of new unrest. Former administrators did not understand that the cause of the Miao disturbances

[text continues on p. 89]

/141 cont./

*782 [787] [777] incense and paper are burned. They watch the stance of the animal to divine good and bad luck. If the water buffalo, on entering the house, lifts his feet to advance, with its head facing the incense censer, and glances at the ancestral shrine, then it portends good luck. If the water buffalo is stubborn and refuses to move forward or even tries to back out as if frightened, then it portends bad luck. After the water buffalo has been bought, a Miao sorcerer is asked to come to the house to present the ox to the kuei, and also to beseech the kuei. After this presentation, the family has to wait for the first frost after the autumn harvest to make the sacrifice. When the date is decided it is never changed or postponed.

*782 602 [203] After the autumn harvest has been completed and the first frost has arrived, an auspicious day is chosen to sacrifice to the kuei. Half a month before, four paternal male cousins are asked to go separately to where the relatives live to notify them. The most important relatives are the families of the host's mother's brother and the wife's maternal uncle, who are said to be the "leg-bearing relatives." They are so-called because after sacrificing to the kuei, one leg of the buffalo is given to the maternal uncle's relatives. A buffalo is divided into four legs. The first belongs to the /host's/ mother's brother, the second to the wife's maternal uncle, and the third and fourth are sent to other close relatives. The "leg-bearing relatives on receiving the notification [203] presents the messenger with a strip of red cloth as an expression of gratitude. *782 Moreover, within the 12 days before the sacrifice, one must avoid seeing unclean things, such as a dead cat, [783] a dead dog, or a dead person. If this avoidance is violated, then [784] the person may not be in the company of the buffalo kuei. The "leg-bearing" relatives often go together with the clan brothers /of the host/, making up a number of at least ten or more men up to as many as 60 or 70. Also invited are musicians, trumpeteers /?/, and drummers, to go in formation. Wealthy families imitate [550] [177] the old customs of the former Manchu dynasty, displaying official insignia, playing fine music, and beating gongs and carrying parasols. The maternal uncle's family entitled to the first leg

/160 cont./

*782 [776] [753] [755] soil, the people have to sacrifice to this shen to seek protection for all the villagers. It is said that this shen is very malignant and can cause people to become sick, but when offered sacrifices it can also bring quick recovery.

Five cups of wine and four piles of money are placed on the ground before the shrine. Inside the shrine three sticks of incense are stuck in an incense burner as well as a pair of candles. Another stick of incense is stuck into the ground behind the priest. Also four strings of money are hung upside down on a slender bamboo pole which is placed crosswise in the shrine. The sorcerer-priest wears ordinary clothes and holds the ritual knife and chiao-tzu, first uttering an incantation [787] and divining with the chiao-tzu, then pouring the wine and stating the reasons. He also asks the shen to receive the sacrificial things, and then there is a recess. After this, he takes a small winnowing basket, in which are four piles of beef or pork and a bowl of salted pepper soup, and lays it down before the wine cups. The sorcerer-priest then utters an incantation, requesting the shen to come to enjoy the sacrifice. After the incantation the sorcerer-priest and the bystanders eat a little of the wine and meat. Then an additional four bowls of cooked rice, each with a pair of chopsticks stuck in, are offered up. The sorcerer again utters an incantation and [787] performs divination for every family in the village in turn. After this, he burns paper and sends off the shen, and all eat the wine and meat.

(3) Sacrifice to T'ien Wang

*782 784 [776] In the Miao area, before the Hsiao-shu period /a solar period, about July 7-21/, the two days, chen and szu, are days of prohibition when they sacrifice to T'ien Wang /Heaven King"/, also known as the White Emperor T'ien Wang /i.e., White Emperor Heaven King/. On these days butchering and wine selling, fishing, hunting, mourning, or making merry

1 [i.e. Shen of the Flying Mountain Shrine - ANALYST]

/160 cont./

*782 [784] [776] [627] [778] are all forbidden. After the prohibitions are lifted and the sacrificial beasts presented, normal life may be resumed. The Miao are very much in awe of this shen. If one has drunk blood and taken an oath in a T'ien Wang temple, one would not dare to repudiate it. There are many T'ien Wang temples in the Miao area, the largest of which is at Ya-ch'i, Kan-ch'eng (Illus. 69), which is regarded by the Miao as holy ground. A Miao village without a T'ien Wang temple sometimes may request the T'ien Wang to come to the village to decide a case. He may also be [627] asked to go on an inspection tour, as in Illus. 70, showing the T'ien Wang of Hsin-chai, Feng-huang, who was asked to go to another village to decide a case.

Besides the two days of sacrifice to T'ien Wang before the Hsiao-shu period, the Miao may also write complaints, secret accusations, etc., and make vows to T'ien Wang at other [731] [755] [691] times in the event of danger, such as the ravages of soldiers and rebels, serious illness, or losing a lawsuit. A table is set up in an empty room, and on it are placed five teacups and a piece of tile. Chaff and beeswax as well as paper money are burned. The suppliant kowtows and makes a vow, and invokes the protection of the shen. In the vow he promises a pig or a goat, or both, or /Illus. 69 and 70 on pp. 161, 162/ /163/ an ox, depending upon the seriousness of his problem and his financial condition. A sorcerer-priest is also asked to come to the house to make the vow if the purpose is important. The table set at the [691] [731] [755] time of making the vow is not removed until the time the vow is fulfilled. If the case is won, or the patient recovers, or no distress is caused in time of war, the vow must be fulfilled. The things promised may be increased but not decreased. Even if the results shown are not as expected, still the vow must be fulfilled, but in this case the things promised may be reduced.

773 776 What shen after all is this White Emperor T'ien Wang? Stories vary. According to Miao Fang-pei Lan, Volume 22, there are three stories. The first was about the three sons of T'ien-chiang of the Han period; the second was about the three sons of the Bamboo King; and the third story was about the three brothers of

[14 cont.]

241 mountain terrain with poor soil, in which they can grow only corn, buckwheat and mixed grains. They also rear cattle, [231] horses, pigs, and principally sheep. At Wei-ning and Ta-ting, where the territory is highly mountainous, the climate is cold, and the population is thin; it is unfit for raising crops but best fit for grazing. In the southeast the Miao-I areas are comparatively better and suitable for rice cultivation. Besides [283] agriculture they are also engaged in simple handicraft industries, [286] such as home spinning and weaving. The commercial centers 443 of the Miao-I in all areas are the village fairs held during the day for the bartering of goods. The fairs are located like a network in some convenient spots in the cities, on a vacant lot, or on the slope of a hill. They are named after certain cyclic animals such as chicken, dog, cow and so on. At the time of the fair men and women who come from all places number from several hundred to several thousand. At the fair everyday articles of household use are displayed in rows of adjoining straw sheds. A fair is a scene of activity and gaiety. The villages in 778 which the Miao-I live are often endowed with rich resources, but 314 their belief in the earth as the dwelling place of the dragon spirit 316 forbids them to exploit its wealth, such as felling the trees for 784 timber and digging the mines for minerals. Hence their occupations are limited and their culture is backward.

6. Conclusion

000 Having learned from the foregoing the actual conditions of the Miao-I societies in Kweichow, we can realize their precarious situation. Today, enemy hoofs have ravaged half of the country, while the Miao-I areas have risen in importance with the din of guns in our war of resistance. We cannot afford any longer to allow the Miao-I people, who are owners of their lands, to muddle through life in their primitive way of living. It is hoped that the government administration and leaders of the society will begin to pay attention to the Miao-I communities,

[25 cont.]

●784 coffins are borne by sixteen persons and the smaller ones, by eight. The son-in-law of the deceased leads the funeral procession with a lighted bark of fir tree, followed by the daughter-in-law, carrying on her back three sheng of grains in a basket. There are drummers, liu sheng players, and men who fire rifles and firecrackers. On such a solemn occasion, of course, the priest is not missing. Wielding a dagger in his left hand and holding an empty water bucket in his right, he walks along, abandoning the bucket as soon as he passes the village gate. As he moves along he swings the dagger and mumbles magic phrases. The coffin is followed by family members and friends and relatives, the latter each sending a package of glutinous rice to be taken along it is said, by the deceased to the nether world for distribution among those kinsmen already gone before. After burial the bereaved family mixes all the rice together and distributes it among the guests, the family itself being forbidden to eat this rice. When the burial ceremony is completed they return to the bereaved family, where they set up the spirit tablet for the deceased. The priest lays his dagger on the left of the tablet. At that time, the bereaved family has to provide wine and meat to feed the guests and after the meal they take their leave. For his three days of performance the priest re-
[465] ceives as reward a basketful of glutinous rice, a pig's heart, a pig's stomach and a jug of wine.

Three days after burial, the family of the deceased returns
765 to the tomb to offer sacrifices known as "fu-shan" [going back to the mountain]. The spirit tablet in the house has to be guarded by the elder son for about a month in the case of either deceased parent. During this month he is not supposed to cross the threshold or a bridge, nor to step into a puddle of water, nor to sing songs, nor to eat bamboo or bracken. After the period of spirit-guarding is over, the family has to send a package of glutinous rice of about two or three sheng and a cock to the house of the maternal uncle. Within three years after the burial regular sacrifices must be made at the tomb at every spring festival (twenty-five days after the beginning of spring) [in early March], after which "kua ch'ing" [hanging the green] [26] at Ch'ing-ming time [about April 5th] would be quite enough.

[180 cont.]

796 and then hang out knots of scented rice straw, but no red peppers. These decorations are in expectation of a prosperous year.

After having celebrated "The Big Year" on the thirtieth day of the twelfth month and having decorated the door on the New Year's day, the Hua Miao and the Ch'ing Miao would remain at home to rest without doing any work. The food for the New Year was prepared in advance on a lucky day (dragon and [777] dog days are lucky), and it is not cooked again until another lucky day comes around. [181] So on New Year's day there is no kitchen drudgery as only pre-cooked meals are eaten. The [784] New Year's day being the first of the year, everything has to be auspicious and inhibitions are many. For instance, 1) no sewing is done by women at home; 2) nothing is taken into the house from outside; 3) no water is carried; 4) no knife is used; 5) no one is allowed to go barefooted and shoes must be worn; 6) no cursing is allowed; 7) no rapping on the wall is allowed; 8) the floor must not be swept; 9) no collection of debt is permitted. Besides, there are the proverbial "three days of liberty" when [527] parents would allow their sons and daughters unrestrained freedom [593] in the pursuit of recreation and happiness on the first, second and third days of the year. After this period the children once more submit themselves to parental restraint. On the first day of the year the old and young are clothed in new garments and have fun all day long. Only the Hsiung and Yang families 769 among the Ch'ing Miao have the custom of worshipping ancestors 796 in the evening. At the time of the sacrifice, the head of the family would spread a straw mat on the floor of the middle room or the side room and place on it incense and candles as well as three bowls of rice. In each bowl is pitched a piece of pork on a bamboo stick with three straw knots to represent the ancestors. In addition there are three bowls of beancurd and three pieces of tz'u-pa [glutinous rice balls]. They call out aloud to ask their ancestors to pass the New Year with them. Then the male members of the family begin to kowtow in the order of their age. After the paper money is completely burned, they gather up the things on the straw mat. The rice straw and the bamboo

Akha AO4
Miao AE5

/139/

b) Music and Musical Instruments

A M 533 The basic music is the same among both peoples; both peoples know singing and the use of musical instruments.

Singing

Singing plays an important role among the Meau as well as among the Akha; both sexes sing on various occasions. I found no confirmation for the assertion by Dhuraratsadorn that the Meau make music only in connection with burials. To be sure, the Akha enjoy singing even more than the Meau, for whom singing while working in the rice fields is prohibited by M [243] [784] a taboo (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Cult and Taboo"), whereas the Akha sing unhindered and by preference at just such work.

Among both peoples there are a few traditional songs of old whose texts are unalterable. The dance songs of the Akha girls belong to this group. The great majority of song texts, however, are improvised and depend on the situation and the singer. There are, for instance, many variations of the songs with which the mother sings her child to sleep. Hopes, wishes, and admonitions are woven into these lullabies of the Meau in M [854] which are repeated innumerable times and always to the same melody:

M [539] "Sleep well, my child, I shall cover you to keep you warm and go into the rice field to get fodder for our animals."

"Sleep, my girl, and do not cry, otherwise the dogs and the pigs will bite you."

"Sleep well, my boy, and do not play with knives and do not lose your covering."

"Sleep, my child, I shall go into the rice field and cut sugar cane for you and bring you good food."

A M 533 832 Singing is very important for lovers; it gives them a chance to express the intensity of their emotions, knowledge, mental ability, ready wit, and humor. It is significant that

/212 cont./

784 One of the taboos of the Meau is that it is inadvisable to
262 set foot in places inhabited by spirits. It is expressly forbidden
[776] to eat the meat of the large black squirrel. Anyone who violates this taboo will die immediately, according to the belief of the Meau. Lajonquière (1) speaks of a prohibition against eating horse

1. II, p. 303.

meat. There is no such taboo among the Meau in Thailand. To
[231] be sure, the Meau investigated by me did not raise any horses
[782] at all. In answer to my question, however, I was told that as a rule horses are not used as sacrificial animals and are eaten only in exceptional cases, because horses are too rare and therefore too valuable to be slaughtered.

272 Furthermore, among the taboos there is the prohibition
784 against ever drinking the milk of any animal. I was shown how
825 strictly every taboo is generally observed by an incident that I
123 experienced, because in the course of time I had made such a name for myself among the Meau as a doctor that people came to me from afar in order to have me treat them or give them medicine. Among those who came to me seeking to be cured, there was a Meau mother who did not have enough milk for her baby. The child, about two months old, was already starved, and /213/ all the Meau, including the mother, were aware of this. In spite of many proofs of their confidence in me and in spite of the almost incredible love of the Meau for their children, I did not succeed in persuading the Meau to permit me to give the baby cow's milk. Even the child's mother could not be persuaded, although there was a milk cow available and I made it quite clear that the baby was otherwise doomed to certain death. The child did soon die of undernourishment.

123 On another occasion I found the wife of a chief among my
262 patients. She asked me to examine her and was convinced that
[846] she suffered from an abdominal ailment, for, as she told me,
[164] full of remorse, she had violated the taboo that women in
[624] childbed are forbidden to eat meat for one month after the birth of the child. She now believed that the spirits were punishing her for the transgression. An examination of this sick

/213 cont./

123 262 [164] woman showed that she was suffering from hookworms, which could easily be cured.

I have already mentioned the taboo which comes into effect, in case of a death in a village, for the village community 784 as well as for the mourners and especially for the family whose 765 member has died. Food prohibitions are not tied in with death, [262] but after the death of a woman, the children and the widower [834] have to refrain from sexual intercourse for one year whereas after the death of the husband, widows are subject to this commandment for only one week.

834 846 Marabail (1) reports of the Meau in Tonkin that after the

1. Page 451.

birth of a child the parents may not have sexual intercourse with each other.

835 The incest taboo is observed very strictly among the Meau in Thailand. It is forbidden for young blood-relatives of the opposite sex to stand together or to look or smile at each other. Since, as I stated earlier, any Meau man to whom a girl offers [273] a glass of alcohol views this, according to custom, as an invita- [832] tion, it is strictly forbidden for girls /214/ to serve alcohol or even to drink to men against whom the marriage prohibition applies for them.

533 In the fields of the so musically inclined Meau, one does 461 not hear singing during the work or during rests, because this 784 would violate a taboo. It is believed to be certain that non- [626] observance would bring a misfortune, that one of the workers would be hurt, either by a tool or by part of a falling tree.

784 Just as the Meau in their cult practices do not in general [177] want to borrow anything from the pertinent customs of the other peoples living around them, so are the many prohibitions of the Chinese unknown to them or ignored. On the other hand great significance is attached to every native taboo. Every taboo is in force for the entire life of the individual as well as for the whole tribe; the only exceptions are taboos that are [756] limited in time, which are automatically lifted after the

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/214 cont./

M 784 [756] [626] [821] corresponding period has elapsed. Otherwise, however, not even the shaman has the power nowadays to lift or to modify a taboo. The people are convinced that non-observance, which would bring the punishment called for in connection with the particular prohibition, would be generally punished by the spirits and ancestors so that lightning would strike the malefactor and kill him.

A 776 782 [171] The cultic practices of the Akha are generally similar to those of the Meau, but quite different in particulars. The Akha devote a regular cult to all the spirits and ancestors, with the exception of the god of heaven, "ɣădŏdŭchŏ," and the spirit of the world. The god of heaven, it will be recalled, remains excluded from the regular cult, because in the view of the Akha he dwells above and below the clouds, all the other spirits are his subjects, and therefore he, of course, partakes of all the sacrifices offered to them. As has also been stated, the creator of the world, "yăbĭdĕlăhăt," about whom I could learn only vague ideas, is likewise offered no sacrifices, but I was unable to obtain more detailed information on this.

A 782 The Akha, too, view the sacrifice as a means of making the spirits and ancestors favorably disposed toward them and likewise use invocations to establish contact with the spirit concerned or the ancestors during the sacrifice. In contrast to the

A [516] Meau, however, the Akha do not assume a definite position while uttering their prayers. /215/ Some may be seen bending one

A [788] knee, others squat, and still others stand. Set prayer formulas, here again in parallel with the Meau, are also unknown among the Akha. One turns to the spirit with ordinary words and explains the matter to him in detail. Such prayers or invocations are always associated with the offering of sacrifices, which, however, in comparison with the Meau, are relatively rare.

/Fig. 56 appears here./

A 782 778 [241] The sacrifices are usually offered at the presumable abode of the spirit concerned, if special sacrificial places or little temples have not been erected for this by the Akha (Fig. 56). For example, before clearing is begun, a small temple abode is erected for the field spirit, yămyătsă, and sacrifices are made